

**Washington, DC** - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4), a member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the main investigative committee in the House, returned to Washington this week for two oversight hearings to examine the actions of federal regulators and the three largest credit rating agencies, leading up to the current financial crisis.

After questioning current and former executives of Standard & Poor's, Moody's Corporation, and Fitch Ratings, Congresswoman McCollum said, "We have heard stories of culpability, incompetence and, in my opinion, corruption. This Member of Congress has downgraded your AAA rating!"

Testifying before the Committee were, Jerome Fons, former executive, Moody's Corporation; Frank Raiter, former executive, Standard & Poor's; Sean Egan, Managing Director, Egan-Jones Ratings; Deven Sharma, President, Standard & Poor's; Raymond W. McDaniel, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Moody's Corporation; and Stephen Joynt, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fitch Ratings.

The Committee held another hearing to examine the roles and responsibilities of federal regulators in the current financial crisis, where former Chairman Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan, former Secretary of Treasury John Snow and Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission Christopher Cox testified.

Congresswoman McCollum told federal regulators that when they “decide to let the private market run free, the public interest is left defenseless to the greed of Wall Street.”

She told Mr. Snow, “your Treasury Department didn’t act to prevent this crisis, in fact, your Department blocked states from protecting their citizens.”

Congresswoman McCollum referenced a photograph of officials and executives using a chainsaw to destroy a tall stack of federal rules taken in 2003 at a press conference to announce a new initiative to limit regulation on banks while Mr. Snow was in charge of the Treasury Department. The picture includes representatives of the banking industry and some of the top Treasury officials including the Director of the Office of Thrift Supervision, James Gilleran & the Comptroller of the Currency, John Hawke.

*Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) serves on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee and the Appropriations Committee.*

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